

## North Coast Regional Algal Coordinating Committee

27 March 2014

### Blue-green algae alert – Emigrant Creek Dam

Emigrant Creek Dam and the creek below the dam in the Richmond catchment, is recording significant levels of Blue-green algae.

Mr David Basso, Chair of the North Coast Regional Algal Coordinating Committee (RACC), said that there was a potential health risk to people and animals due to the harmful effects of blue-green algae.

"We wish to advise landholders in the catchment area downstream of the dam to be aware of the situation," Mr Basso said.

"People who use the creek for recreation are also advised to avoid contact with the affected water while the red alert is in place as it could result in skin rashes, eye and ear irritations."

"Whilst the water extracted from the dam and treated for human consumption poses no risk, ingesting the untreated creek water can lead to diarrhoea and other long term health problems. Asthma attacks can also be brought on by contact with blue-green algae."

There is some evidence that small quantities of algal toxins may enter fish flesh when a bloom produces toxins. Any fish caught in water affected by a bloom should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption.

People should not eat any shellfish or the internal organs of fish from Emigrant Creek.

"We also advise landholders around and downstream of Emigrant Creek Dam that stock and dogs are particularly at risk and should not be allowed to drink from Emigrant Creek," Mr Basso said.

"Domestic pets should also be kept away from the area, especially dogs which are particularly susceptible as they ingest algae by licking their coats."

All animals and stock should be kept away from the waterway as affected stock may die."

Rous Water is monitoring the situation very closely with regular sampling and analysis of the affected water and asks that the public heed the warning signs erected by Council.

"Council will continue to monitor this bloom and the community will be advised when conditions change," said Mr Basso.

Information about blue-green algae blooms is available from the freecall Algal Information Hotline **1800 999 457** or visit the NSW Office of Water website - **[www.water.nsw.gov.au/algal\\_alerts](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/algal_alerts)**.

The current status of the algal bloom is also available on Rous Water's web site – [www.rouswater.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rouswater.nsw.gov.au)